ORIGINAL

1-9 IOA

Code 14B

30 March 1956

SIXTH ENDORSEMENT on VFA 324 AAR ser 13-55 concerning AD-4B, 132339 accident occurring 13 Dec 1955, pilot RUSSIN

From: Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commanding General, Aircraft Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic
(2) Director, U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report

1. Forwarded, readdressed concurring in general in the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board and in the subsequent endorsements thereto.

2. Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet letter Code 71B of 19 March 1956 points out means for obtaining greater flexibility in the existing communications equipment and directs the Commanding Officer, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN to make specific recommendations if these means are not satisfactory.

(b) (6) [redacted]

By direction

Copy to:
COMCARDIV TWO
CO USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN
COMFAIRNAS SIX
CO VFA 324

ORIGINAL

6F/312/BM/jau
A4-3
6 Feb 1956 274

FIFTH INDORSEMENT on VMA-324 AAR Ser 13-55 concerning accident involving AD4B BUNO 132339 on 13Dec55, pilot REUSSER

From: Commander Sixth Fleet
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
(2) Director, Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: MarAttackRon 324 Aircraft Accident Report Ser: 13-55;

1. Forwarded, concurring in the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board and the contents of the previous endorsements.

R. A. OFSTIE

Copy to:
BUAIR (2 direct)
NAVAVSAFCEN (2 direct)
COMCARDIV TWO
CO USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39)
CAG-6
CO, VMA-324

ORIGINAL 2

FB2/A25
31:OLD:lt
Ser: 49
21 JAN 1956

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on VMA-324 AAR Serial 13-55 concerning accident involving AD4B BuNo 132339 on 13 Dec 1956, pilot REUSSER

From: Commander Carrier Division TWO
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander SIXTH Fleet
(2) Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
(3) Director, Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: MarAttackRon 324 Aircraft Accident Report serial 13-55; forwarding of

1. Forwarded, concurring with the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board and previous endorsements thereto.

2. Special attention should be directed to providing height finding radar for use by the final controller.

R. Goldthwaite
R. GOLDTHWAITE

Copy to:
CO, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39)
CAG-6
VMA-324

3

CVA39/A25
31:ABC:les
Serial: 127
14 JAN 1956

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on VMA-324 AAR Serial 13-55 concerning the accident of AD4B BuNo 132339 occurring 13 December 1955 Pilot REUSSER

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Carrier Division TWO
(2) Commander SIXTH Fleet
(3) Commander Air Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet
(4) Director, Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: MarAttackRon 324 Aircraft Accident Report Serial 13-55; forwarding of

1. Forwarded concurring with the conclusions and recommendations of the AAR and the remarks made in the ~~First~~ Second Endorsement.

2. Steps have been taken to insure no conflict with the CCA pattern while it is being used.

James H. Flatley
JAMES H. FLATLEY

Copy to:
VMA-324
CAG-6

ORIGINAL

COMMANDER CARRIER AIR GROUP SIX
CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

CVG-6:JEL:pwg
Ser: 9
9 January 1956

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on VMA-324 AAR Serial 13-55 concerning the accident of AD4B BuNo 132339 occurring 13 December 1955 Pilot REUSSER

From: Commander Carrier Air Group Six
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, U.S.S. LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39)
(2) Commander Carrier Division TWO
(3) Commander U.S. SIXTH Fleet
(4) Commander Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
(5) Director, U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: MarAttAkron 324 Aircraft Accident Report serial 13-55, forwarding of

1. Forwarded, concurring with the conclusions and recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Board.

2. It is also recommended that all pilots be briefed to fly the final portion of their CCA approach with their aircraft trimmed as nearly as possible for hands off flight so that in case of a momentary distraction to the pilot the plane will tend to maintain attitude, altitude and heading.

3. This command would like to reemphasize the urgent need for: (a) Better and more flexible radio installations both in Primary Fly and at the Landing Signal Officers Platform, and for (b) Altitude information for carrier controlled approach final controller scopes.

J. E. LACOUTURE.

Copy to:
VMA-324

4

ORIGINAL

ORIGINAL

FF14/VMA-324
Adj/JS/dwb
A25
30 December 1955

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on VMA-324 AAR Ser 13-55 concerning AD-4B Buno 132339 accident occurring 13 December 1955, Pilot REUSSER

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 324
To: Chief of Naval Operation (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander, Carrier Air Group SIX
(2) Commanding Officer, USS Lake Champlain (CVA-39)
(3) Commander, Carrier Division Two
(4) Commander Sixth Fleet
(5) Commander, Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet
(6) Director, Naval Aviation Safety Center

Subj: VMA-324 AAR Ser 13-55; submission of

1. Forwarded, concurring with the recommendations and conclusions of the Aircraft Accident Board.

K. L. REUSSER

5

ORIGINAL

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT
OPNAV FORM-3750-1 (REV. 3-52)

OPNAV REPORT-3750-1

THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BOARD SHALL SUBMIT THIS REPORT TO THE C.O. OF THE ACTIVITY CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION. IT SHALL THEN BE FORWARDED BY THE C.O. IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT AAR INSTRUCTIONS.

1. DATE OF ACCIDENT	HOUR	2. ACTIVITY SUBMITTING REPORT	3. AAR SERIAL NO
15 Dec 1955	2211A	Marine Attack Sqd. 324	13-55

4. MODEL A/C	BUNO.	CHECK DAMAGE TO A/C	5. REPORTING CUSTODIAN OF A/C
AD-4B	132339	[X] . [ ] . [ ] . [ ] . [ ] .	Marine Attack Sqd. 324

6. NAME OF UNIT OPERATING THE A/C	BASED AT	OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND
Marine Attack Sqd. 324,	USS Lake Champlain	CVG-6, CO CVA-39, ComCarDiv 2 ComSixFlt, ComAirLant, NASC

7. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT	8. UNIT TO WHICH OPERATOR ATTACHED
40°29'N 11°16.5'E (At Sea)	Marine Attack Sqd. 324

9. PERSONNEL INVOLVED (Including name and injury code of those injured, not occupants of A/C)

A FULL NAME, RANK, SERVICE, FILE NO. (List person in control first)	B AGE	C BILLET	D POSITION	E INJURY
Kenneth L. REUSSER, LtCol., USMC, [redacted]		Pilot	Cockpit	F

10. PILOT EXPERIENCE	TOTAL ALL MODELS	TOTAL THIS MODEL	LAST 12 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS THIS MODEL	INSTRUMENT RATING
TOTAL HOURS	4387.1	573.5	452.7	50.4	50.4	Stnd/[illegible]
INSTRUMENT HOURS			53.7	17.9	17.9	PILOT'S AGE 35
NIGHT HOURS			61.9	24.2	24.2	DATE DESIGNATED
[illegible]	166/12	50/12	50/12	21/10	[illegible]/10	1 April 1942

11. [illegible]	12. PURPOSE OF FLIGHT	CODE	13. TIME IN FLIGHT
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	Carrier Controlled Approach	3A1	[illegible]-44

14. TYPE OF ACCIDENT	CODE	15. MANEUVER INVOLVED
Collision - Water	B	Carrier Controlled Approach

16. WEATHER		CEILING	VISIBILITY	17. DARKNESS		18. CLEARANCE
[X] VFR	[ ] IFR	4000'	10 miles	[X] YES	[ ] NO	VFR

19. WIND DIRECTION	FORCE	20. ATTITUDE ON IMPACT	ANGLE OF IMPACT	STOPPING DISTANCE	SPEED ON IMPACT	21. FIRE FOLLOW IMPACT
45°Port	15kts	100Est. Nose High	10°Est	Unkn	100kts	[ ] YES [X] NO

22. AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE DATA (Fill in all data in every case of material failure or malfunction, actual or suspected)

HISTORY	SERVICE TOUR	MONTHS IN THIS TOUR	TOTAL NUMBER OF OVERHAULS	FLT HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL	FLT HOURS SINCE ACCEPTANCE	TYPE OF CHECK LAST PERFORMED	FLT HOURS SINCE CHECK	NO. DAYS SINCE CHECK
AIRCRAFT	2	9	1	377.1	937.9	3dMaj	19.4	25
	MODEL ENGINE	SERIAL NO. OF ENGINE						
ENGINE 1	R3350-26WA	W-190596	2	397.8	1403.7	3dMaj	19.4	25
ENGINE 2								
ENGINE 3								
ENGINE 4								

23. HAS THIS A/C BEEN DAMAGED IN PREVIOUS ACCIDENT(S) DURING PRESENT SERVICE TOUR? [ ] YES [X] NO — IF "YES", GIVE DATE(S) OF PREVIOUS ACCIDENT(S) — AAR SERIAL NUMBER OF THIS ACCIDENT, IF ASSIGNED

24. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS (Check or fill in only one primary "P" factor, all others secondary "S")

P S [ ] [ ] PILOT [illegible] ERROR; [ ] [X] ERROR OF OTHER PERSONNEL; P S [ ] [ ] MATERIAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION; P S [ ] [X] Conflicting Traffic Patterns

25. [illegible] INVOLVED IN THIS ACCIDENT (List other)

[ ] [illegible] [ ] [illegible] COLLIDED WITH [ ] COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTY [ ] AIRPORT HAZARD [ ] ROUGH SEAS [ ] TERRAIN CONDITIONS

[illegible] [ ] [illegible] [ ] ENGINE FAILURE [ ] FUEL EXHAUSTION OR MAL CONSUMPTION

[illegible] [X] [illegible] [X] SHOULDER BELT [ ] [illegible] Gloves Goggles [ ] G-SUIT [X] PROTECTIVE HELMET [X] OXYGEN EQUIP.

Mask Mae West Attached Equip.

SERIAL OFFICER REPORT SERIAL NUMBER 13-55

[illegible] [redacted] USNR [illegible] Officer

[redacted] LtCdr., U[illegible]

[illegible], Chief. [redacted]

29. The accident

At about 2027A Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. REUSSER took off from the USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39), as the leader of a four plane division. The purpose of the flight was to make practice night carrier controlled approaches. One practice approach was successfully accomplished by the flight prior to final recovery. Upon completion of this practice approach the flight was rendesvoused. The flight was then cleared for another CCA, following two jets, to a scheduled final landing.

Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was in the first AD following the two jet aircraft. The F2H preceeding Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER had received a wave off by the LSO on CCA final. The F2H pilot then was cleared for a normal carrier approach which also culminated in another wave off. The F2H pilot remained in the pattern for a second normal approach. As the F2H turned off the 180 degree position, the AD was on final CCA approximately 2½ to 3 miles aft of the carrier. At this time the CCA final controller advised Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER of the presence of the jet and shortly afterwards asked Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER if he had the jet in sight. Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER then shifted his attention from his instrument flying to look for the jet aircraft. Before he could shift back to his instruments he had lost enough altitude so that his aircraft had contacted the water. (REFER TO ENCL 9).

Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER vacated the aircraft and, after inflating his pararaft, floated until rescued by a whaleboat from the USS GOODRICH.

30. Damage to Aircraft

Upon initial contact with the water the landing gear was apparently collapsed or sheared and the propeller received sufficient damage to cause excessive vibration. The aircraft bounced back in the air but was vibrating so badly that the pilot immediately cut the throttle and executed a water landing. The aircraft was then lost at sea.

31. The Investigation

The investigation of the accident revealed the following facts:

a. That Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was on an authorized flight.

b. That Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER is considered fully qualified for this type flight.

c. That Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was operating under the positive control of the CCA final controller.

d. That the assigned altitude for this portion of the approach was two hundred feet.

e. That at the time Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was on final approach an F2H was in the normal carrier approach traffic pattern.

f. That Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was on an assigned CCA frequency and the F2H pilot was on primary land-launch frequency. These frequencies did not coincide.

g. That Primary Fly and the LSO were in a positive radio contact with the F2H only.

h. That the pilot had been advised of the presence of the F2H aircraft by the CCA final controller and was asked by the final controller if he had the jet in sight.

i. That there was approximately a thirty second delay in Primary Fly's message to CCA to affect a wave off of the AD.

j. That the wave off was given to the pilot but it was too late in that the crash occurred at about the same time.

k. That Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER had the canopy closed at time of impact to aid radio reception and that the normal and emergency canopy opening systems did not work. However, he was able to open it manually with no difficulty.

l. That the LSO's radio had not been cut in by CCA to the frequency of the approaching AD. The general procedure of the CCA controller has been to cut in the LSO's radio when the aircraft is at a range of approximately two miles.

m. That the present radio altimeter installation is undesirable in that the instrument is controlled by the "non-flight" instrument rheostat and that the rheostat must be turned full bright before the instrument can be easily read. This position causes all other non-flight instruments to be uncomfortably bright to the pilot. In addition to the above lighting problems, the necessity of switching the altitude range switch at the relatively low altitude of 400-600 feet is considered an undesirable feature.

32. The Analysis

An analysis of the facts uncovered in the investigation indicates that the pilot's attention was distracted from instrument flying at a critical moment by the advice from the CCA final controller that another aircraft, that the pilot had not been aware of, was in the vicinity. This momentary diversion from strict instrument flight resulted in a loss of approximately two hundred feet of altitude and a water landing.

Further analysis revealed that Primary Fly had been concerned over the possible proximity of the aircraft to each other and had told the CCA controller to wave off the approaching AD. But, because of the fact that the message was relayed through the 2VC circuit and the resultant delay, the message reached the pilot too late to be effective.

Through the use of his seat pack, raft and life jacket, Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER was able to remain afloat. By means of his two life jacket flares used at spaced intervals he was able to direct the attention of the rescuing ships to his whereabouts. In addition, he used a waterproof flashlight and police-type whistle which was commented on by the rescuing destroyer crew as being very effective.

The failure of the canopy to open can be only partially explained. An informal discussion with the squadron engineering officer and the Douglas Aircraft Company representative brought forth the following information:

a. The probable rupture of the hydraulic line in the landing gear area in which case direct immediate engine stoppage could cause the loss of

sufficient hydraulic pressure to render inoperative the normal canopy opening system.

2. The failure of the emergency system can be explained only by two (2) possibilities. Either the pressure in the emergency air bottle was low or there was a restriction or break in the line caused by the impact with the water. It is felt that the former possibility can be eliminated in that the plane captain and the pilot who had flown the plane that same afternoon stated that the air bottle pressure was satisfactory.

33. Conclusions and Recommendations

a. Conclusions.

It is concluded that:

1. Pilot error is the primary cause of this aircraft accident in that the pilot allowed the aircraft to lose altitude at a critical time.

2. The presence of another aircraft brought to the pilot's attention by the CCA final controller to the pilot, was a contributory factor in that it caused the pilot to be distracted from his concentration on instrument flying.

3. The fact that emergency radio contact with aircraft in the immediate vicinity of the ship by a single visual control agency is not available is a very unsatisfactory situation.

4. A system that combines the normal carrier approach and carrier controlled approach is an unsafe practice, (Refer to Encl (10) for sample CCA procedure) unless a definite procedure is established for giving one aircraft preference and waving off the other before the situation becomes dangerous.

5. The canopy failed to function due to probable crash damage.

b. Recommendations.

It is recommended that:

1. Continuing emphasis be placed on the necessity of strict attention to flight instruments when instrument flight is being conducted.

2. Traffic control procedures be established to prevent occurrence of the conditions existing at the time of the accident. This would include an automatic wave-off for all aircraft within three miles on a CCA final approach when there is another aircraft inside of the 180 degree position on a normal approach.

3. Primary Fly and the Landing Signal Officer be furnished adequate radio equipment enabling them to select channels and immediately contact any aircraft in the vicinity of the ship. During this cruise alone, the presence of such equipment at the disposal of the Landing Signal Officer would quite probably have averted a previous fatal accident in which a pilot flew into the water as well as this accident. The probability of similar type accidents occurring in the future is high. The avoidance of one such accident through the use of this recommended radio equipment would most certainly make the

installation and maintenance cost well worth while. It is considered that this is an urgent requirement that should receive immediate action.

4. All aircraft be provided with a mechanical means of releasing the canopy from the inside similar to that now installed in the F9F8 aircraft.

5. Pilots be made aware of the fact that the canopy operating systems are not necessarily infallible especially after they have been damaged by a crash.

6. CCA controllers cut in the L30 radio on the approach frequency as early as possible depending upon traffic conditions.

7. Installation of auto pilots with a "maintain level flight" feature using the new high accuracy altimeters be considered for all planes that are destined to fly frequently from carriers at night.

8. All approach controllers be completely acquainted with the pilot's dependence on flight instruments during night and instrument condition approaches and the required continual visual consentration on the various flight instruments, so that distracting directions will not be given. If a prospective collision condition exists the controller must give the pilot he is controlling a safe heading to fly that will avoid the collision.

9. Further efforts be made to obtain altitude as well as directional information for carrier controlled approach final controller scopes similar to that now available to CCA final controllers, so that the final controllers will be able to give pilots altitude as well as heading corrections.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENNETH L. RUSSAW, (b) (6) USMC CONCERNING

On 13 December 1955 at 2027 hours, I took off from the USS Lake Champlain in AD-4B BuNo 132339 on a scheduled night Carrier Controlled Approach flight. I was the flight leader of a flight of four (4) AD aircraft. My wingman was First Lieutenant (b) (6) USMCR, Captain (b) (6) (b) (6), USMC was the section leader and First Lieutenant (b) (6) (b) (6) USMCR was in the number four position. The take off and rendezvous were normal, however due to traffic and cloud conditions, clearance to begin Carrier Control Approach operations was delayed until approximately 2135. One practice Carrier Control Approach was completed, the flight was rendezvoused and the second run was started. The Carrier Control Approach controller cleared me for a final approach to a landing. At no time during this approach did I receive or acknowledge for wave off instructions. My approach was continued in a normal manner until I was placed under positive voice control of the final Carrier Control Approach controller. At a position of two (2) miles from the carrier at an altitude of two hundred (200) feet, the aircraft was in a landing condition with tail hook, landing gear, and flaps down. At this time I received a transmission from the Carrier Control Approach controller informing me that there was a jet aircraft in my area. This transmission was followed by an instruction to turn to a heading of two hundred and forty (240) degrees to the right. Thinking that this turn was given to avoid the jet aircraft my approach was continued. The next transmission I received from Carrier Control Approach was "do you see the jet?". My immediate reaction was fear of a mid-air collision and my eyes left the aircraft instruments in an effort to locate the jet. I immediately returned my attention to my instrument scan and noted that the altimeter was indicating zero. The gyro horizon indicated nose and wing level. As I rapidly added power and rotated the aircraft to a slightly more nose up position the aircraft made initial contact with the water. The aircraft bounced into the air, however the vibration was so intense that I realized that the aircraft would not remain airborne. I then cut the throttle, concentrated on my gyro horizon and settled back into the water. The entire crash landing was conducted on instruments.

Due to the smoothness of the final impact and the intensity of the aircraft vibration; I am of the opinion that the initial impact sheared the aircraft landing gear and bent the propeller blades.

The aircraft remained afloat for approximately one and one half (1½) minutes, therefore escape was not difficult; however the following malfunction of the canopy was encountered. The canopy was in the closed position at the time of the crash. When the canopy control was placed in the open position the canopy did not open. When the control was placed in the emergency position I could hear the emergency air leaking, but the canopy still did not open. I then opened the canopy manually without further difficulty. In order to more clearly hear the CCA controller's instructions I do not normally open my cockpit canopy until I have picked up the Landing Signal Officer. Pilot survival equipment operated perfectly and through the means of flares, waterproof flashlight and survival whistle, I assisted the USS GOODRICH in locating my life raft.

My comments concerning the subject accident are as follows:

1. When flying Carrier Controlled Approaches at night at an altitude of 200 feet, and with an indefinite horizon, I do not consider it possible to be under the Control of the Carrier Control Approach final controller and to accurately fly his instructions unless the pilot is operating on instruments. The Carrier Control Approach controllers must be made aware of this fact and not attempt to divert the pilot's attention from the cockpit. I believe I should have been given a "wave off" when the jets presence was first known.

2. As both myself and the pilot of the jet aircraft concerned were cleared for a final landing I am of the opinion that one common control agency should have been in direct radio contact with both aircraft.

(1) (1)

I believe this accident could have been avoided:

1. By my initiating my own wave off when first advised that there was another aircraft in the vicinity.

2. By the Carrier Control Approach final controller giving me a wave off.

3. By my not allowing my attention to become diverted from my instrument scan and inadvertantly allowing the aircraft to lose altitude.

4. By the Primary Flight Control officer, who had visual contact with both aircraft, being provided with direct radio contact, thereby having the capability of giving a "wave off" without going through the talker system to request the final Carrier Control Approach controller to transmit the wave off instructions.

Kenneth L. Russell

KENNETH L. RUSSELL

12

(2)

(1)

STATEMENT OF LCDR (b) (6) REGARDING CRASH OF AD-4B BUNO 132339, LTCOL. K. L. KRUSSER, (b) (6) USMC, PILOT

At approximately 2200 on the night of 13 December 1955 I was at my Flight Quarters station in Primary Fly Control, directing the recovery of aircraft. The night was dark but with a fair horizon. The scheduled recovery at this time consisted of 2 F2H4s, 8 ADs and 1 AJ2. All aircraft were to be brought to the ramp by CCA. In the event of a wave off, the waved off aircraft was to join the pattern for a normal carrier landing. As usual the jets were number one in the pattern.

The recovery proceeded as scheduled. I do not remember now whether just one or both of the F2Hs received a wave off. The Pri Fly log shows an interval of 6 minutes between the landing times of the 2 jets so it would appear that only the second jet aircraft received a wave off; however, this is not too material.

As the F2H continued in a normal carrier approach, the first AD appeared aft off the port quarter in their CCAs. As the F2H started his turn at the 180°, it began to appear that an uncomfortable situation was developing, due to the apparent rate of closure of the F2H in the normal pattern and the first AD in CCA. Accordingly, I told my talker, (b) (6) to tell CCA to wave off the first AD. (b) (6) told me he got an acknowledgement from CCA. I estimate this to be approximately 30 seconds before the crash. Shortly thereafter, as the planes continued in their approach, the AD was observed to get very low and then the lights disappeared. The LSO then came up on primary land/launch and said a plane had hit the water aft on the port quarter.

My primary duty on board is Assistant Air Officer. I have held this billet for approximately 5 months. I have over 14 years aviation experience and 3200 hours flight time.

(b) (6)

13

(3)

ENCLOSURE (2)

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL [redacted] (b) (6), USMC CONCERNING THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF AD-4 BUNO 132319

On the night of 13 December 1955, as Carrier Air Group SIX Duty Officer, I was in Primary Flight Control aboard the USS Lake Champlain (CVA-39).

This is the normal duty station for the Air Group Duty Officer during launch and recovery of aircraft. The second night recovery, which consisted of two F2H4 (Banshees) and several AD aircraft, was scheduled for 2200 Able time. All aircraft were to make a radar controlled approach to final under control of the ship's Carrier Control Approach unit.

The first Banshee landed at approximately 2203 followed by a second Banshee which was waved off at about 2205 by the Landing Signal Officer. This second Banshee was instructed, over the Land Launch Net by the Primary Fly Officer, to remain in the "pattern" and make a normal approach. The pilot of the Banshee commenced a normal approach and called at the 180° position at which time the first AD, LX-1, piloted by Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER, was reported by Carrier Control Approach to be on his final approach at six (6) miles. Since six (6) miles afforded sufficient room to allow the Banshee to land ahead of LX-1, the Banshee pilot was cleared to continue for a second approach. This approach was too low and he was "waved off" by the Landing Signal Officer. The Banshee pilot was again instructed to make a normal approach by the Primary Flight Control.

The Banshee pilot reported for the third approach at the 180° position for his turn to final and gave his fuel status. He was cleared to continue his approach, at which time information was received from Carrier Control Approach over the 2JG (Sound Powered Telephone) Circuit that LX-1 was on final at three (3) miles. The 2JG talker was directed by Primary Flight Control to instruct Carrier Control Approach to "wave off" the first AD. The 2JG talker had difficulty in getting through to the 2JG talker for Carrier Control Approach and a delay of approximately thirty (30) seconds developed. During this delay the Banshee and AD were closing on what appeared to be a collision course, with the Banshee entering the final slightly nearer the ship than the AD. The 2JG talker was told again to tell Carrier Control Approach to wave off the AD aircraft. No acknowledgement was received from Carrier Control Approach.

At about 2212 Able, and a few seconds after the last wave off instructions were initiated into the 2JG system, the lights of the AD aircraft disappeared at about one mile on the Carrier Control Approach final. The Banshee landed aboard without further incident.

[redacted] (b) (6)

EXPERIENCE:

Total hours	2370.9
Years Flying	14 yrs.
Carrier landings	148

ORIGINAL

Statement of Lieutenant (b) (6) USN concerning aircraft accident involving AD-4B BuNo 132339 occuring 12 December 1955, PILOT REUSSER.

On the night of December 13, I was the Landing Signal Officer controlling the final portion of Carrier Controlled Approaches. An F2H-4 had been waved off on final CCA and had remained in the pattern upwind commencing a normal type carrier approach. On the second approach the F2H was again given a wave off and, after proceeding upwind, commenced a third approach. During the interval following this second wave off and the commencement of the third approach, I noticed two sets of aircraft lights at approximately a 45 degree angle to the ship's course and at an estimated eight miles astern apparently on a CCA. As the F2H turned off the 180 degree position, the first oncoming aircraft on CCA appeared to be on the same 45 degree bearing as before and had closed to about three and one-half miles astern. I commenced working the F2H on the paddles between the 90 and 45 degree position. As the F2H approached the 45 degree position, I could see in the background that the first oncoming CCA aircraft was getting extremely low. I told the other LSO standing behind me to call and tell him he was low. He commenced calling on the [illegible] handset but within several seconds the aircraft contacted the water. [illegible] my talker to inform Primary Fly that there was a plane in the water. Meanwhile, the F2H continued its approach and landed aboard.

The crashed aircraft appeared to contact the water at a very shallow angle in that the wing lights momentarily dimmed and then appeared again before finally disappearing.

The other LSO on the radio informed me thathe did not believe our CCA handset had been shifted over to the final approach frequency of the crashed aircraft in that no steers or directions to the pilot by CCA had been heard by him.

This accident might have been prevented if an ARC-27 set, which could be set up easily and quickly on Guard channel, were available on the LSO platform.

(b) (6)

(b) (6) LT, USN
CVG-6 Landing Signal Officer.

15

ENCLOSURE (4) to VMA-324 ASR 26-56 of 13 December 1955

STATEMENT OF LCDR (b) (6) [redacted], CIC OFFICER, CONCERNING THE CRASH OF LT. COL. REUSSER ON 13 DECEMBER 1955.

After the plane was turned over from the traffic controller to the CCA final controller I observed the track of the aircraft on the final controllers scope up until the aircraft crashed. During this approach there was a jet aircraft downwind in a normal carrier landing pattern, which had been given a wave off by the landing signal officer upon completion of a CCA approach.

The jet appeared on the final controllers scope which was in the normal pattern and was at a range of approximately one mile turning inbound for the deck. At this time the AD aircraft was at a range of two and one-half miles. Since there was still a very slight closure of the two aircraft I advised the final controller to advise the pilot of the AD that there was a plane ahead of him at one and a half miles crossing left to right. The controller did this and when the distance between the jet and AD had closed to one and one quarter miles the range began to open since the jet was then in the groove. I informed the controller when the AD was at two and a half miles to bring him on in as the jet would start to open the range as soon as he was in the groove. The opening of the range between the jet and AD did take place prior to the crash. Immediately thereafter at a range of approximately two and one quarter miles the sound powered talker received instructions over the 1SC - FRI FLY - CCA sound powered circuit to give the AD a wave off. I heard the controller give the AD a wave off telling him the reason for same. Shortly thereafter I heard that the AD had crashed.

(b) (6) [redacted]

LCDR USN

16

(5)

ENCLOSURE (5)

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT (b)(6) USN, CONCERNING THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF AD-4, BUREAU NUMBER 132339, PILOT KRUSSER

On the night of 13 December 1955, Colonel KRUSSER with a flight of four AD-4 aircraft was brought in for landings aboard this ship under CCA control. As traffic controller I received him from the pickup controller and cleared him to continue his approach. To the best of my recollection his approach was normal in all respects throughout the phase under my control.

At approximately 7½ miles from the ramp he was turned over to the final controller. Once assured that he was under control of the final controller I stopped concentrating on him and began working closely with the following aircraft. Colonel KRUSSER continued to track normally on my radar scope until lost in the sea return at approximately three miles.

I heard the LSO-PRI FLY-CCA sound power phone talker instruct the final controller to give the Colonel a wave off because of an approaching jet and observed the controller give the wave off. Very shortly thereafter I heard that Colonel KRUSSER had crashed into the water.

(b)(6)

Lieutenant, USN
CCA Officer

17

(6)

ENCLOSURE (6)

STATEMENT OF AIR CONTROLMAN FIRST CLASS (b) (6) USN
CONCERNING THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF AD-4B, BUREAU NUMBER 132339, PILOT REUSSER

Lieutenant Colonel REUSSER's aircraft was turned over to me at approximately 6 miles by the traffic controller. At approximately 2½ miles I was told by Lieutenant Commander (b) (6) to advise the pilot of the jet in the pattern in front of him. I did so and asked the pilot if he had him in sight. The pilot came back garbled and to the best of my knowledge he said something about "can't see very well out of the cockpit". I rogered for that and gave him further instructions back to the "On course" line. Lieutenant Commander (b) (6) had told me to bring him on in and it looked like we had plenty of time. This all happened in a few seconds. He was still at approximately the same range when Air Controlman First Class (b) (6), our sound powered phone talker, told me to tell him to take a wave off. I gave him an immediate wave off to the right, gave him the reason for wave off and switched him to button 7.

(b) (6)

AC1, U. S. Navy
CCA Final Controller

U.S.S. LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CVA-39)
AEROLOGICAL OFFICE

CRASH REPORT

WEATHER OBSERVATION

ORIGINAL

INSTRUCTIONS: The man with the observation duty will in addition to entering a complete observation in the official logs, fill in all of the following information and will file this form in the Aerological File's under the section H4-2B (Crash Reports), along with the work sheet.

- -

Time 2211 (Local) 2111 (GCT) DATE 13 DEC 1955

Plane No. # TYPE AD4 SQUAD No. VMA-324

Position: Lat. 40°29' Long. 11°16.5' Course 217 Speed 25

Sky & Ceiling 4000 FEW T SCATTERED Visibility 10

Weather and obstruction to vision Intermittent thin scud 5-700 feet.

Sea level pressure: Millibars 1014.1 Inches 29.946

Temperature 61 Dew Point 57 Relative Humidity 86

Wind: Apparent Direction 357 (degrees) Velocity 38

True Direction 210 (degrees) Velocity 13

Altimeter Setting 29.943

REMARKS SEA WATER TEMPERATURE 53 DEGREES.

(b) (6) AG3

(b) (6) AG3 USN

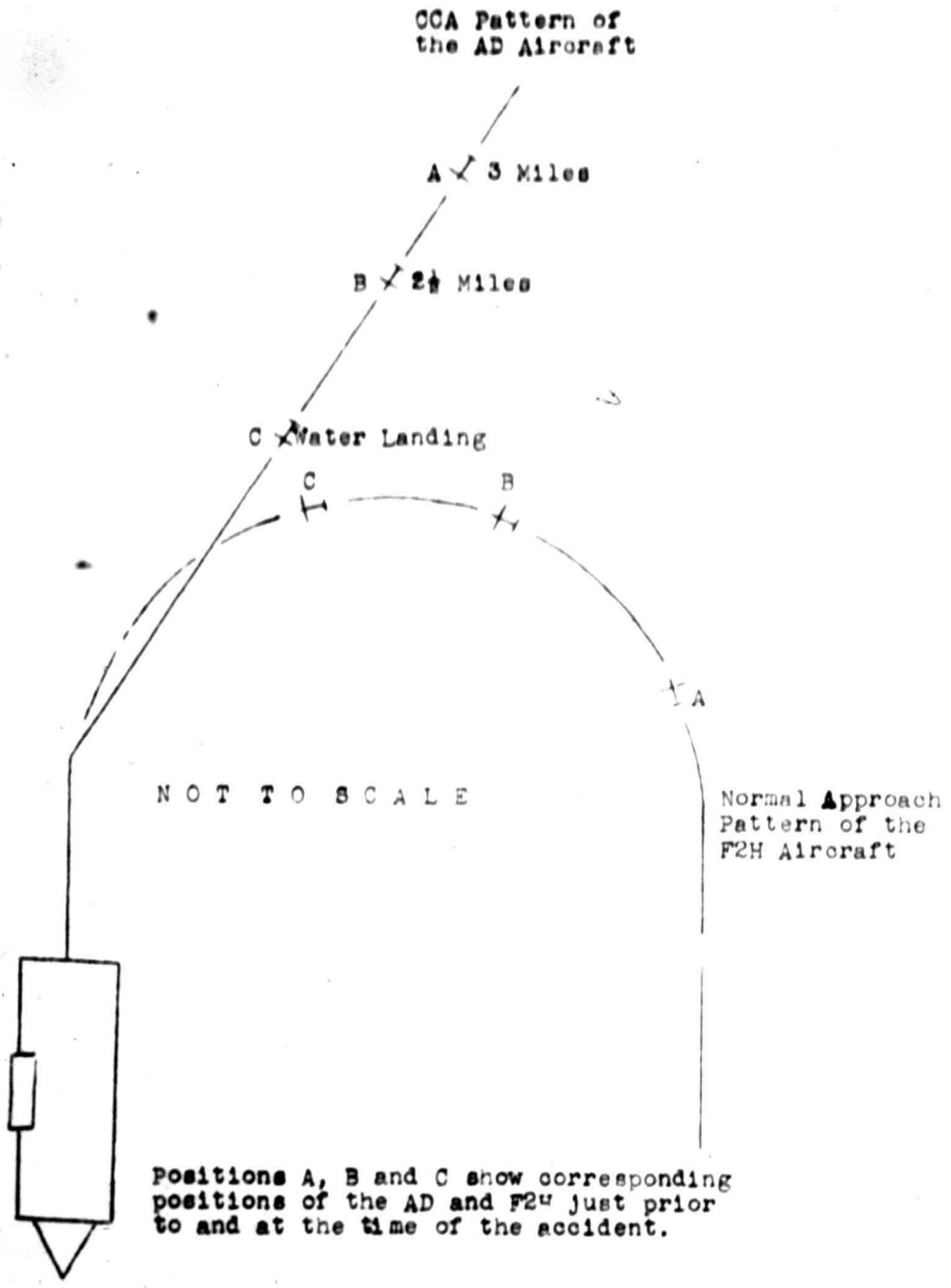
Observer (Signature, Rank/Rate

(b) (6)

19

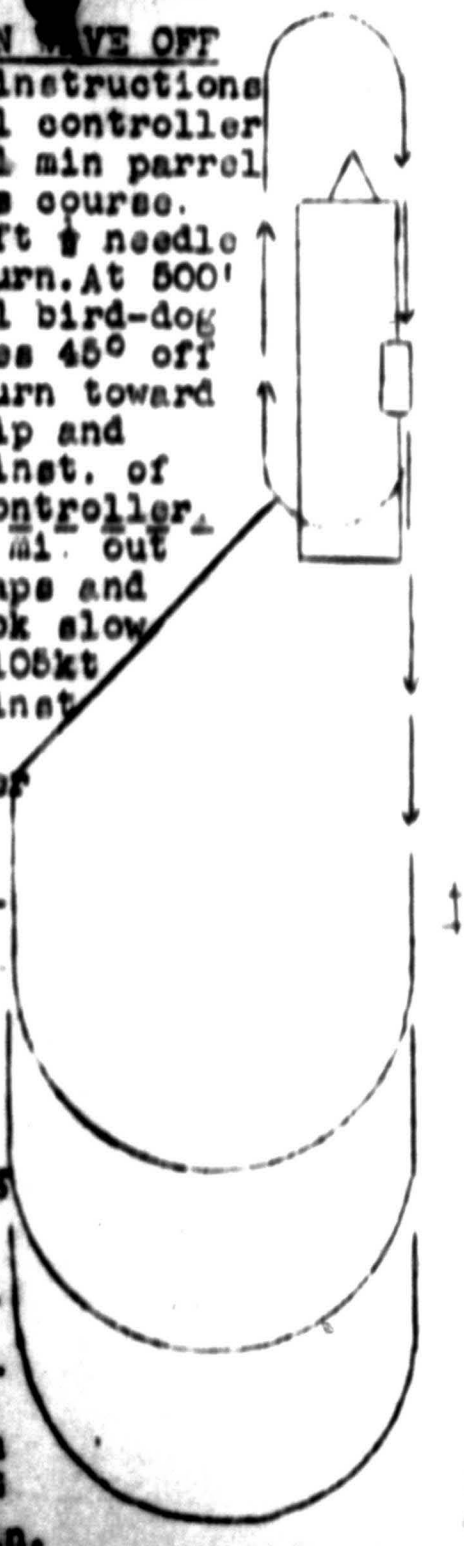
VERIFIED BY (b) (6) LCDR., USN

ENCLOSURE (8) to VMA-324 AAR [illegible] of 15 December 1955



Positions A, B and C show corresponding positions of the AD and F2H just prior to and at the time of the accident.

CCA - ON WAVE OFF
Follow instructions of final controller or fly 1 min parrel to ships course. Turn left ½ needle width turn. At 500' Fly till bird-dog indicates 45° off tail. Turn toward ship ship and follow inst. of final controller. About 4 mi. out drop flaps and tail hook slow to 100-105kt follow inst final contoller When needle of Bird-Dog indicates 25°R. Turn to ship. - Call reaching 1000' - slow to 135 kts. Lower gear decending let down at 120kt 2000'/min.



STANDARD HOLD
PATTERN 160 KTS.
RIGHT HAND TURN.

Loader will call departing down wind.

Level 160 knots one (1) minute outbound for every 2000' altitude min. 3 minutes

Loader call break-ing.

30 second interval on break.

21

1 minute between decending planes.

ENCLOSURE (10) to VMA-324 AAR 13-55 of 15 Dec 19